



MEDIA ADVISORY

8th Fighter Wing

Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea

Commercial: 011-82-63-470-4705

Fax: 011-82-63-470-4705

Email: 8 fw.pa@kunsan.af.mil

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AIRMEN DONATE BLOOD TO KOREAN CHILD

KUNSAN AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF KOREA – A life was saved when two airmen with the rare blood type AB negative traveled to Chonbuk National University Medical School, Chonju, Korea, Dec. 28.

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Jundt and Airman 1st Class Daniel Crane, both members of the 8th Maintenance Group, were contacted because a Korean newborn baby girl needed a blood transfusion, and she need it immediately.

“I was sleeping when I got a knock on my door,” said Crane, who has known of his rare blood type all his life. “They said they were wondering if I would donate blood to a little baby in Chonju.”

Both Crane and Jundt volunteered without hesitation and traveled together to the hospital where they each donated a pint of blood.

“I think most anybody, if they had been asked to do this, would have done it,” Jundt said. “I was a little nervous and didn’t know what to expect, but it went really well. I can’t say enough good things about the Korean people who worked down at the hospital. They treated us very well. They were really appreciative.”

The blood donation was life saving, according to Dr. Sung Kwan Park, a kidney doctor at the hospital. Both Park and his wife, Dr. Oh Kyung Lee, who works with premature babies and is the primary physician overseeing the care of the baby girl, were very appreciative.

The little girl was very sick, said Park, and if a blood transfusion did not occur in a timely manner, she risked losing her life or suffering permanent neurological complications.

Maj. Steve Vreeke, 8th Fighter Wing flight surgeon, along with members of the 8th Medical Group, coordinated the life-saving efforts.

“The newborn daughter was having a hemolytic response due to blood Rh incompatibility,” Vreeke said, which means the mother’s blood had antibodies that were destroying the baby’s blood.

“The newborn needed a transfusion with AB negative blood. However, this blood type is very rare in South Korea, around one in one million. Among Americans this blood type is more common, about one in every two hundred,” Vreeke said.

After a review of medical records, Vreeke and his staff determined there were four Wolf Pack members with the AB negative blood. However, two of the members were unavailable.

Fortunately Jundt and Crane were ready and willing to provide the blood transfusion to the little girl, who is now in stable condition.

“We owe America very much,” said Park, who noted this was not the first time Kunsan Air Base has been contacted in this kind of situation. “We are very happy for the quick response of the flight surgeon and the two gentlemen volunteers.”

There are no regrets on the part of the Wolf Pack members who helped out.

“I’d hope for the same if it were my kid,” Crane said. “It made me feel really good. It just makes you proud.”

Media interested in covering this story should contact the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office.